



Great being with all of you at the 2024 WiMI Conference!

We were impressed by your questions, your courage to join us on stage without knowing exactly what you were volunteering for, and by your positive spirit!

Words & Phrases to avoid...

Here is a cheat sheet of key words & phrases to avoid, along with the classic ah, um, like, you know and so. Listen for these words and phrases in others in order to have them disappear from your conversations. We added a few more beyond what we discussed in the session.

These words and phrases cause people to tune out, misunderstand or take messaging less seriously. The best replacement for everything on this list is silence.

1. **Honestly:** Using this word makes people question our honesty. Same of truly, frankly, truth be told, and to tell the truth.

2. **Just:** The ultimate doormat word. This downplayer makes what we are saying less important. Saying "I just have a question" makes the question seem as though it doesn't matter.

3. **I was just thinking:** This double whammy includes the weak "just" and then tells people we are thinking. When are we not thinking? It makes our thoughts sound less important.

4. **Sorry:** There is a time and place for apology. Too often this word is used in emails and conversations before asking a question or for a favor. Over apologizing turns us into doormats.

5. **I will say:** This phrasing is overused. It takes away from a profound message. Why tell someone what you will say? Say it. The cousins of this phrase include: in conclusion, I will start by telling you, etc.

6. **I want to start by:** Similar to #5. This weakens the messaging and kills the pacing. This useless phrase creates an exit ramp for people to tune out what you are saying.

7. **I will try:** This leaves room for doubt. Say what you will do. Stay away from telling people what you hope or aim to accomplish.

8. **Should:** This is another doubt creator. It leaves people unsure.

9. **Actually:** This breeds the same distrust as honestly. It creates a snag in conversations. Picture someone telling you that they actually liked your idea. How would you feel?

10. **I'm not sure if this is right but...** This hedging style phrase shows that you question your own wording. It's often used when someone doesn't want to be blamed or held accountable for a thought or action.

11. **And so on and so forth...** Let go of all phrases that don't add anything. If you wouldn't pay for the words in a 30 second Super Bowl commercial, drop them. Other similar ones include, as a matter of fact, case in point, etc.

12. **You know what I mean:** Opens up the door for people to think that no, they do not know. Violators of this phrase tend to use it to punctuate sentences. Other people have similar crutch words: right, does that make sense and ok.

Body Language = 70% of communication.

- **Chin Rub:** When you rub your chin, it lowers your heart rate and is a sign of self soothing. If someone is doing this, pause the conversation and give the person a moment. If you keep rambling on, the person will likely not observe your words.
- **Other Self Soothing:** Collarbone rub, arm rub, playing with hair, twirling a pencil, etc. We often do these things when feeling nervous or anxious. Channel the energy to a place people can't see. Open and close your toes or try flexing your calf muscles.
- **Open Palms:** When talking, make sure that you have open palms instead of closed fists, finger pointing or having your palms towards you. Open palms show that you are open to ideas.
- **Eye Contact** shows confidence and keeps people engaged.
- **TALLsmall Hack:** To avoid talking on top of each other, Keith and I will keep our hands open when talking and then will shut them to signify to the other person that we are done. This works well if you and a colleague are being interviewed at the same time.

If you are interested in continuing the conversation, reach out to us via our website at TALLsmallproductions.org.